



THE MAN'S NAME HAS GRACED OVER 40 DUST JACKETS, BUT RARELY PROMINENTLY. NO ONE READS, SAY, SERENA'S BEST-SELLING MEMOIR BECAUSE DANIEL PAISNER CO-WROTE IT. AT LEAST, THEY DON'T THINK THEY DO. HIS NEXT IS *NOBODY'S PERFECT: TWO MEN, ONE CALL, AND A GAME FOR BASEBALL HISTORY*.

## 5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GHOST-WRITING A SPORTS BOOK

BY DANIEL PAISNER  
AS TOLD TO  
MATT MCCUE

**1. A GREAT STORY IS AS VALUABLE AS A GREAT ATHLETE.** "I write two kinds of sports books. There are the ones with an athlete's name above the title, usually Hall of Fame-caliber players. Then there are those about athletes who lived an everyman moment. What ends up lifting them from the mundane are the elements of conflict and surprise. I look for stories that show grace, humanity and sportsmanship."

**2. OFF-THE-RECORD MEANS OFF-THE-RECORD ...** "I am not there in an adversarial capacity. It's not my job to get the 'real' story. I work at the subject's pleasure, writing whatever they are comfortable sharing with the public. I often sign a confidentiality agreement that covers the personal stuff that doesn't make it in the book."

**3. ... BUT I STILL TRY TO KEEP IN THE GOOD STUFF.** "When an athlete doesn't want to discuss something, I try to play the role of a strong devil's advocate. If I think someone is making a mistake by leaving out a story I think is necessary, I have to tell them. But ultimately, these are their books and it has to be their call."

**4. ATHLETES REMEMBER EVERYTHING.** "It's amazing to see how they have total recall, even of years-ago moments in inconsequential games. Ron Darling, the former pitcher, can tell you the weather and the count on a batter for games in 1986. Serena Williams can tell you what happened in a match she played on the junior circuit."

**5. TODAY'S GAME IS TOMORROW'S GIG.** "I saw Jim Joyce make the call that broke up Armando Galarraga's perfect game on TV, then watched how each conducted himself afterward. I came away thinking that there was a story there—not a baseball story, but a story about humanity. The next day, I called my literary agent and said, 'Find out if they'd be willing to throw in on a book.' Happily, they were."